United Nations A/59/483/Add.5

General Assembly

Distr.: General
15 December 2004

Original: English

Fifty-ninth session
Agenda item 85 (e)

Sustainable development: implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

Report of the Second Committee*

Rapporteur: Mr. Azanaw Tadesse **Abreha** (Ethiopia)

I. Introduction

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 85 (see A/59/483, para. 2). Action on sub-item (e) was taken at the 18th and 36th meetings, on 27 October and 24 November 2004. An account of the Committee's consideration of the sub-item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/59/SR.18 and 36).

II. Consideration of proposals

Draft resolutions A/C.2/59/L.14 and A/C.2/59/L.46

2. At the 18th meeting, on 27 October, the representative of Qatar, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa" (A/C.2/59/L.14), which read:

> *"The General Assembly,*
>
> "*Recalling* its resolution 58/242 of 23 December 2003 and other resolutions relating to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,

* The report of the Committee on this item will be issued in nine parts, under the symbol A/59/483 and Add.1-8.

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"*Recalling also* its resolution 58/211 of 23 December 2003, in which it declared 2006 the International Year of Deserts and Desertification,

"*Reaffirming* that the Convention is an important tool for poverty eradication, and that desertification contributes to food insecurity, famine and poverty and can give rise to the social, economic and political tensions that are factors in forced migrations and conflict,

"*Also reaffirming* that desertification constitutes a serious obstacle to sustainable development,

"*Noting* that timely and effective implementation of the Convention would help to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, given the concentration of poverty and hunger in the rural, dry and degraded lands of developing countries,

"*Expressing concern* about the insufficient resources allocated to the focal area of sustainable land management in the current financial cycle of the Global Environment Facility,

"*Stressing* the need for more funding from various sources to address land degradation,

"1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;

"2. *Stresses* the importance of the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, for meeting the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, and, in this regard, invites all Governments to take further measures to strengthen the implementation of the Convention;

"3. *Invites* the Secretary-General to give due consideration to the role and place of the Convention in ongoing work in the context of the preparations for the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly in 2005, including the report of the Millennium Project;

"4. *Invites* the Global Environment Facility to provide additional resources to its focal area on sustainable land management in its current financial cycle and calls upon the Facility, in the forthcoming replenishment process, to increase the level of resources allocated to this focal area as a means of strengthening the implementation of the Convention;

"5. *Takes note with great interest* of ongoing efforts to diversify the availability of financial resources to support activities aimed at combating desertification and poverty, as called for by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its sixth session;

"6. *Invites* the donor community to increase its support to the Convention with a view to achieving a global coalition for combating land degradation and desertification that will contribute to the improvement of the global environment and to the sustainable development of dry lands;

"7. *Urges* the secretariat of the Global Environment Facility and the secretariat of the Convention to finalize the memorandum of understanding in

an expeditious way and to submit it, for consideration and adoption, to the Conference of Parties to the Convention at its next session and to the Global Environment Facility Council at a subsequent meeting;

"8. *Urges* United Nations funds, programmes and regional commissions, development agencies, the Bretton Woods institutions and donor countries to integrate actions in support of the Convention into their programmes and strategies in order to support the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration;

"9. *Calls upon* Governments, in collaboration with relevant multilateral organizations including the Global Environment Facility implementation agencies, as appropriate, to integrate desertification into their plans and strategies for sustainable development;

"10. *Urges* all parties to the Convention to undertake special initiatives in observance of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification and, as far as they are able, to support the related activities organized by the secretariat;

"11. *Reiterates* its invitation to all parties to pay promptly and in full the contributions required for the core budget of the Convention for the biennium 2004-2005, and urges all parties that have not yet paid their contributions for 1999 and/or the bienniums 2000-2001 and 2002-2003 to do so as soon as possible in order to ensure continuity in the cash flow required to finance the ongoing work of the Conference of the Parties, the secretariat and the Global Mechanism;

"12. *Calls upon* Governments, and invites multilateral financial institutions, regional development banks, regional economic integration organizations and all other interested organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to contribute generously to the General Fund, the Supplementary Fund and the Special Fund, in accordance with the relevant paragraphs of the financial rules of the Conference of the Parties, and welcomes the financial support already provided by some countries;

"13. *Takes note* of the ongoing work of the liaison group of the secretariats and offices of the relevant subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and the Convention on Biological Diversity, and further encourages continuing cooperation in order to promote complementarities among the secretariats, while respecting their independent legal status;

"14. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session on the implementation of the present resolution;

"15. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixtieth session the sub-item entitled 'Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa'."

3. At the 36th meeting, on 24 November, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Ewa Anzorge (Poland) introduced a draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa" (A/C.2/59/L.46), which was submitted on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/59/L.14.

4. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted the draft resolution (see para. 6, draft resolution).

5. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/59/L.46, draft resolution A/C.2/59.L.14 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

III. Recommendation of the Second Committee

6. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Draft resolution
Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 58/242 of 23 December 2003 and other resolutions relating to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,[1]

Recalling also its resolution 58/211 of 23 December 2003, in which it declared 2006 the International Year of Deserts and Desertification,

Reaffirming that desertification constitutes a serious obstacle to sustainable development and contributes to food insecurity, famine and poverty, which are factors that can give rise to social, economic and political tensions, including forced migration and conflicts, and that the Convention is an important tool for poverty eradication,

Also reaffirming the universal membership of the Convention, and acknowledging that desertification and drought are problems of a global dimension in that they affect all regions of the world,

Noting that timely and effective implementation of the Convention would help to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[2]

Emphasizing the need for the provision of adequate resources for the focal area of land degradation, primarily desertification and deforestation, of the Global Environment Facility,

Stressing the need for further diversification of funding sources to address land degradation, in accordance with articles 20 and 21 of the Convention,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;[3]

2. *Stresses* the importance of the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,[1] for meeting the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[2] and in this regard invites all Governments to take further measures to strengthen the implementation of the Convention;

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[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.

[2] See resolution 55/2.

[3] See A/59/197, sect. II.

3. *Invites* the Secretary-General to give due consideration to the role and place of the Convention in ongoing work in the context of the preparations for the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly in 2005, including the report of the Millennium Project;

4. *Invites* the Global Environment Facility to strengthen the focal area of land degradation, primarily desertification and deforestation;

5. *Takes note with interest* of ongoing efforts to diversify the availability of financial resources to support activities aimed at combating desertification and poverty;

6. *Invites* the donor community to increase its support to the Convention with a view to bringing greater international attention to bear on the issue of land degradation and desertification, which will contribute to the improvement of the sustainable development of drylands and the global environment;

7. *Invites* the secretariat of the Global Environment Facility and the secretariat of the Convention to finalize the draft memorandum of understanding in an expeditious way and to submit it, as mandated by Conference of the Parties decision 6/COP.6 of 3 September 2003, for the consideration of and adoption by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the Council of the Global Environment Facility;

8. *Takes note* of Conference of the Parties decision 23/COP.6 of 5 September 2003 on the programme and budget for the biennium 2004-2005, as an ongoing process of the Conference of the Parties to undertake a comprehensive review of the activities of the secretariat, as defined in article 23, paragraph 2, of the Convention, and looks forward to the review at the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention;

9. *Urges* United Nations funds and programmes, the Bretton Woods institutions, the donor countries and other development agencies to integrate actions in support of the Convention into their strategies to support the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration;

10. *Calls upon* Governments, where appropriate, in collaboration with relevant multilateral organizations, including the Global Environment Facility implementation agencies, to integrate desertification into their plans and strategies for sustainable development;

11. *Encourages* countries to undertake special initiatives in observance of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification and, as they are able, to contribute to its preparatory process;

12. *Reiterates* the invitation to all parties to pay promptly and in full the contributions required for the core budget of the Convention for the biennium 2004-2005, and urges all parties that have not yet paid their contributions for 1999 and/or the bienniums 2000-2001 and 2002-2003 to do so as soon as possible in order to ensure continuity in the cash flow required to finance the ongoing work of the Conference of the Parties, the secretariat and the Global Mechanism;

13. *Calls upon* Governments, and invites multilateral financial institutions, regional development banks, regional economic integration organizations and all

other interested organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to contribute generously to the General Fund, the Supplementary Fund and the Special Fund, in accordance with the relevant paragraphs of the financial rules of the Conference of the Parties,[4] and welcomes the financial support already provided by some countries;

14. *Takes note* of the ongoing work of the liaison group of the secretariats and offices of the relevant subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,[5] the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and the Convention on Biological Diversity,[6] and further encourages continuing cooperation in order to promote complementarities among the secretariats, while respecting their independent legal status;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session on the implementation of the present resolution;

16. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixtieth session the sub-item entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa".

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[4] ICCD/COP (1)/11/Add.1 and Corr.1, decision 2/COP.1, annex, paras. 7-11.

[5] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

[6] Ibid., vol. 1760, No. 30619.